

West Area Planning Committee

22nd July 2014

Application Number: 13/03454/CT3

Decision Due by: 3rd April 2014

Proposal: Demolition of existing Cadets building. Erection of 17 residential units (6 x 3-bed houses, 1 x-3 bed flat, 10 x 2-bed flats), together with revised access, 35 car parking spaces, cycle parking, bin stores, community garden/play area and landscaping. Change of use of existing office building to Cadets use. (Additional information) (Amended Description)

Site Address: Elsfield Hall 15-17 Elsfield Way (site plan at **Appendix 1**)

Ward: Wolvercote Ward

Agent: Turley Associates

Applicant: Oxford City Council

Recommendation:

APPLICATION BE APPROVED

Reasons for Approval

- 1 The proposed development is considered to make an efficient use of land and deliver much needed affordable housing within an existing residential area. The proposed development will create an appropriate visual relationship with the built form and grain of the residential area while also safeguarding the residential amenities of the adjoining properties. The proposed units would provide good quality housing for the future occupants, and be acceptable in highway terms and energy efficiency. The development would not create any adverse arboricultural, biodiversity, or flooding impacts. As such it would accord with the National Planning Policy Framework and policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026, Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016, and the Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026.
- 2 The Council considers that the proposal accords with the policies of the development plan as summarised below. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity. Any material harm that the development would otherwise give rise to can be offset by the conditions imposed.
- 3 Officers have considered carefully all objections to these proposals. Officers have come to the view, for the detailed reasons set out in the officers report,

that the objections do not amount, individually or cumulatively, to a reason for refusal and that all the issues that have been raised have been adequately addressed and the relevant bodies consulted.

Conditions

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3 Samples
- 4 Biodiversity enhancement
- 5 Tree protection plan
- 6 Arboricultural method statement
- 7 No Felling, Lopping, Cutting
- 8 Service Plan
- 9 Site Arrangements
- 10 Exclude from CPZ
- 11 Landscape carry out after completion
- 12 SUDS/Surface water drainage
- 13 Contaminated Land
- 14 Secure by Design
- 15 Road Safety Audits
- 16 Landscape plan required
- 17 Sustainability measures to meet 20%
- 18 Noise reduction measures carried out in accordance with submitted details
- 19 Air quality measures

Legal Agreement:

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a standard charge on new development. The amount of CIL payable is calculated on the basis of the amount of floor space created by a development. CIL applies to developments of 100 square meters or more, or to new dwellings of any size. The reason that CIL has been introduced is to

help fund the provision of infrastructure to support the growth of the city, for example transport improvements, additional school places and new or improved sports and leisure facilities. CIL is being brought in by councils across the country, although each local council has the ability to set the actual charges according to local circumstances.

Whilst CIL is chargeable this proposal would benefit from relief as it is 100% social housing subject to an application for relief which can be made any time up to commencement.

Principal Planning Policies:

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

CP1 - Development Proposals

CP6 - Efficient Use of Land & Density

CP8 - Design Development to Relate to its Context

CP9 - Creating Successful New Places

CP10 - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs

CP11 - Landscape Design

NE15 - Loss of Trees and Hedgerows

Core Strategy

CS2 - Previously developed and greenfield land

CS9 - Energy and natural resources

CS12 - Biodiversity

CS17 - Infrastructure and developer contributions

CS18 - Urban design, town character, historic environment

CS22 - Level of housing growth

CS23 - Mix of housing

Sites and Housing Plan

SP16 - Elsfield Hall, Elsfield Way

HP2 - Accessible and Adaptable Homes

HP3 - Affordable Homes from Large Housing Sites

HP9 - Design, Character and Context

HP11 - Low Carbon Homes

HP12 - Indoor Space

HP13 - Outdoor Space

HP14 - Privacy and Daylight

HP15 - Residential cycle parking

HP16 - Residential car parking

Other Planning Documents

National Planning Policy Framework

Supplementary Planning Document: Parking Standards, TAs and TPs Adopted Feb 2007.

Public Consultation

As part of the public consultation process a pilot scheme was carried out. This involved the erection of poles to demonstrate the position and scale of the buildings on the site. This is known as the Swiss Pole demonstration. Details can be found at **Appendix 2**.

Statutory Consultees Etc.

- Thames Valley Police Chief Constable (Operations): condition requested to ensure that the opportunity to design our crime is not missed
- Drainage Team Manager: The development is to be drained using SuDs methods including green roofs and porous surfaces for parking areas and not discharge directly to a main sewer.
- Environment Agency Thames Region: This application is deemed to either have a low environmental risk or relate to conditions that were not recommended by the Environment Agency.
- Thames Water Utilities Limited: no objection
- Highway Authority: recommends approval subject to the conditions.
- Oxford Civic Society: inaccuracies with the plans; apartment building substantially higher than surrounding buildings, more dominating; Juliet balconies will not provide any functional amenity for the occupiers; does not “make a positive connection” and does not constitute meaningful encouragement of residents to use alternatives to the car; suggested that the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 is achievable there appears no specific commitment to this; the installation of PV panels appears to be based on Oxford City Council’s requirements relating to on-site generation, rather than maximising the opportunity presented, which, given the Council’s commitment to sustainability, is short-sighted; the apartments should be provided with high standards of air tightness, and heat-recovery mechanical systems for both supply and extract ventilation, to obviate the need for opening windows and to ensure good internal air quality, with minimal energy costs; no mention is made of rainwater harvesting for any domestic purposes, other than garden irrigation from simple water butts; transport Statement contains a number of errors and significant omissions;
- Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum: Neither objects to nor support this planning application; the proposed access and egress points for the Elsfeld Hall site (including the commercial property) will, in effect, create a five- way junction situation is exacerbated by the junction being at the point where Harefields curves and navigation is frequently impaired by parked vehicles

therefore likely increase in highway safety issues; new dwellings should be excluded from the CPZ; the scale, mass and orientation of the proposed buildings adversely affect the right to sunlight and privacy at the rear of south-facing Harefields properties; effect on area character; loss of trees will remove essential screening of the rear of Elsfield Hall and make Harefields an unattractive and featureless road; there is inadequate pedestrian provision; there is no cycle path except in the road where on-coming vehicles swerve to avoid parked cars and cyclists; the development site is in the vicinity of the Cutteslowe Roundabout which exceeds current accepted pollution targets; possible contamination of site; a condition of planning approval should be a binding protocol to minimise disruption during construction.

Individual Comments:

69 North Road, 6 Harefields, 32 Harefields, 30-38 Harefields, 34 Harefields, Mr and Mrs MacLennan

The main points raised were:

- Access is unacceptable at the junction of Meriot Way & access drive to 6 garages (not shown) & 70 car entrance to existing office.
- The new access will affect local off street parking
- Unacceptable increase in vehicular traffic
- On street parking is hap- hazard & cannot be regulated to just one side of Harefields as entrances must be kept clear
- Parking widths for 70 vehicles to serve the existing office look small so they will prefer to park in the approach streets
- There is an urgent need for effective traffic calming/speed restriction measures on the whole of Harefields if this development goes ahead with its (inevitable) attendant increased vehicular activity
- There will also be large construction traffic during the build adding to the problem.
- This development will only make parking matters worse, with likely over spill of on street parking from the development.
- Site density Provision is for 75 persons mainly in shared bedrooms, may be acceptable for council estates but not generally private housing
- Removal of hedge & trees t8, t9 to form entrance reveals massive office block fronting Harefield.
- The beech hedge that divides the properties is a haven for wildlife but is quite thin and will be bare in winter.
- Completely out of character as Harefields to immediate north is 3 storey town houses & to west detached houses along A40 not flats nor 2 storey 3 bed houses
- Poor design of overcrowded flats as north facing balconies have little value except for storage

- The flank of the proposed new houses and, it seems, the access to the rear gardens, is directly at the bottom of my garden and seems to be very close indeed to it.
- Loss of privacy, loss of light
- The proposed apartment block is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on either our properties or other local residents. However the proposed 2.5 storey houses in their current position most certainly will have.
- The scheme seems to be a poor utilisation of the space available.
- The positioning of the childrens play area and community garden in what is effectively an island surrounded by traffic (70 car parking spaces for Elsfield Hall and a further 35 for the proposed development) does not make sense.
- The proximity of the proposed houses to 30-38 Harefields is totally unacceptable and would appear to be completely unnecessary
- Sustainable claims are dubious as houses will generate little electricity from roof photo voltaic as the roofs face due east & west
- Not opposed to the development in principle

Comments as a result of the Swiss Pole demonstration

Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum, 32 Harefields; 13 Warnborough Road (30 Harefields),

- poles revealed the large scale and potentially oppressive nature of the proposed block of flats which will clearly dominate the site; poles highlighted the close proximity of the west side of the proposed building to the adjacent detached house on Elsfield Way; will result in gardens in Elsfield Way being substantially overlooked by residents of the block of flats, with a major reduction of sunlight to these gardens in the mornings; due to the weather i.e. wind the poles had to be lowered therefore the demonstration was likely to have suggested a lower building height;
- Gable end of houses very tall and blank close to boundary, loss of light to rear garden, impact on pond, loss of privacy, houses too close to boundary, loss of view,

Comments as a result of amended plans

34 Harefields, 30 Harefields, 32 Harefields, F Kenny, Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum

- Do not consider those proposed amendments even close to satisfactory resolution of our disagreement with positioning new development in relation to our and our neighbour's houses;
- amendments do not go far enough to satisfy even modestly our fundamental need to fully and freely enjoy our place of living,
- to have natural light in our houses and above all privacy in our freehold properties; propose that new development is to be built at least 6-8 metres

from our fence with lowered roof ridge for another 80 cm from amended proposed roof; loss of sun;

- creating an overpowering sense of enclosure; not satisfactory for a high, oppressive, blank wall to be built immediately behind my small garden, and that it will still impoverish my environment, reducing light, sun and the pleasant outlook; the wall is still too near;
- do not see why the additional parking needs to be sited on our boundary, as next to the by-pass would seem more sensible, and the siting of the "amenity area" does not seem ideal;
- the north boundary hedging is an integral part of the Harefields gardens and there is strong opinion that this needs to be well maintained
- A condition of planning approval should be the implementation of a planting scheme using climbing plants to soften the oppressive impact of the brick wall of the end house in the development, which will confront residents of the south side of Harefields.
- Highway safety still remains an issue, oppose inclusion in CPZ because of possible overspill into Harefields, where parking spaces are already under great pressure due to several HMOs and houses that have been divided into flats.

Relevant Site History:

62/12297/A_H - Change of use from T.A. centre and drill hall to joint examinations board and other university purposes. TEM 23rd October 1962.

63/12395/A_H - Prefabricated temporary timber building for T.A. Centre. TEM 8th January 1963.

63/13022/AA_H - Alterations to drill hall provide offices for the Oxford and Cambridge joint Examination Board (revised). PER 5th June 1963.

63/13022/A_H - Change of use from T.A. centre and drill hall to offices for the Oxford and Cambridge joint examination board with alterations. PER 8th January 1963.

63/13637/A_H - Outline application to construct a building to be used as workshop for the University Theatre on the former parade ground and drill hall. PER 23rd July 1963.

68/20702/A_H - Change of use from garage to form printing workshop. PER 8th October 1968.

70/23027/A_H - Construction of access road to Lovelace Grove Estate. PER 22nd September 1970.

71/24296/A_H - Erection of a prefabricated building to provide office accommodation. REF 25th May 1971.

73/01189/A_H - Alterations to existing offices, garages and rifle range to provide additional office accommodation in the drill hall. PER 27th November 1973.

78/01135/A_H - Conversion of garage to form workshop and store (The Annexe Elsfeld Hall, 15-17 Elsfeld Way). PER 7th February 1979.

86/01230/NF - Provision of first floor bathroom to caretakers house. PER 28th January 1987.

89/00117/NF - Erection of temporary 'portakabin' for office accommodation for 8-11 weeks each year. PER 12th April 1989.

89/01210/NF - Erection of temporary portakabin for office accommodation. PER 5th February 1990.

92/00040/NT - Retention of temporary portable building for office accommodation. (Renewal of NF/1210/89). TEM 10th March 1992.

92/00666/NF - 1) Fire escape door and external staircase in northern elevation. 2) Fire escape door in eastern elevation 3) Fire escape door at first floor, leading to external walkway and spiral staircase in western elevation. PER 28th August 1992.

96/01917/NF - Demolition of existing buildings on site. Construction of new 3 storey building plus basement, together with 85 parking spaces, cycle parking and upgraded access to Elsfeld Way. (Amended plans). REF 14th April 1997.

97/01405/NF - 3 storey building for replacement offices for The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. 85 car spaces & 75 cycle spaces. Barrier to service access from Harefields. Landscaping. (Amended plans). WDN 8th March 2001.

00/00055/NF - Replacement roof. PER 1st April 2000.

00/00382/NF - Change of use from caretakers flat to B1 business use including external alterations. New roof and roof mounted air handling plant. PER 10th June 2000.

02/00328/FUL - Demolition of existing hall. Construction of 24 x 2 bedroom flats for the elderly on 3 floors, together with 20 parking spaces and shared gardens accessed off Harefields. Reorganisation of parking to serve Oxford Psychologists Press Ltd, to provide 76 spaces. (Amended plans). PER 4th April 2003.

04/00982/FUL - Installation of 3 air conditioning units on the east elevation. PER 23rd July 2004.

04/00983/ADV - (i) Two high level non-illuminated banner signs to front elevation
(ii) Two sets of high level non-illuminated lettering on front and west elevation
(iii) Four high level non-illuminated logo signs to front elevation. PER 23rd July 2004.

06/01301/FUL - Installation of 2 no. roof mounted fan cooled condenser units. PER 7th August 2006.

06/01436/FUL - Alterations and extension to the existing car parking areas (no additional car parking spaces formed). Provision of 32 cycle parking spaces and low level lighting bollards. PER 7th September 2006.

10/01917/FUL - Change of use of part of building from offices (use class B1) to fitness centre (use class D2). PER 6th September 2010.

11/00671/T56 - Application for prior approval for 15m telecommunication column and antennae, plus equipment cabinet. 2PA 27th April 2011.

Officers Assessment:

Site Description

1. The application site is located off Harefields and is adjacent to Elsfield Way/A40. The site is currently a car park for the adjoining office building and there is a small building in the south east corner which is currently used by the Cadets. The area is predominantly residential with the office building being somewhat of an anomaly in the area.
2. To the west of the site, fronting Elsfield Way are four detached two storey residential dwellings; to the east the office building which is two/three storey by virtue of its roof design and to the north is a row of three storey residential properties which front onto Harefields and back onto the application site.

Proposal

3. The application is seeking permission for the demolition of existing Cadets building. Erection of 17 residential units (6 x 3-bed houses, 1 x-3 bed flat, 10 x 2-bed flats), together with revised access, 35 car parking spaces, cycle parking, bin stores, community garden/play area and landscaping. Change of use of existing office building to Cadets use. The scheme will provide 100% on-site affordable housing which is to be owned and operated by Oxford City Council.

Assessment

4. Officers consider the principal determining issues to be:
 - Principle of Development
 - Affordable Housing
 - Balance of Dwellings
 - Impact upon adjoining properties
 - Residential Uses
 - Highways
 - Cycle Parking
 - Sustainability
 - Biodiversity
 - Trees
 - Cadet Building

- Other Matters

Principle of Development

5. The NPPF states planning decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land). This is supported by Policy CS2 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.
6. Previously developed land is defined as land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens.
7. The application site is considered to be previously developed by virtue of its previous use as a car park and cadet building therefore the principle of redeveloping the site for residential use would still accord with the NPPF and Policy CS2 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.
8. The site is also allocated in the Sites and Housing Plan (SP16 - Elsfield Hall, Elsfield Way) where any redevelopment would be expected to retain the existing level of employment on the site with the remainder of the site would be suitable for residential. As a Protected Key Employment site, the existing level of employment on the site is to be retained.

Affordable Housing

9. Policy CS24 of the Oxford Core Strategy states that generally a minimum of 50% of residential developments must be provided as affordable housing. Policies HP3 and HP4 of the Sites and Housing Plan set out the detail of how residential developments should contribute to affordable housing. In this case Policy HP3 applies and it states planning permission will only be granted for residential development on sites with capacity for 10 or more dwellings, or which have an area of 0.25 hectares or greater, if generally a minimum 50% of dwellings on the site are provided as affordable homes.
10. This application is for 17 units, all of which (100%) are affordable homes. A minimum of only 9 of the units (50+%) are required for the proposal to be policy compliant of which 80% (7 units) must be provided for social rent, with remaining 20% (2 units) provided as intermediate housing¹. However the proposal is to provide 15 units for social rent and the remaining 2 proposed as affordable rented. The application is therefore satisfactory.. ¹

Balance of Dwellings

¹ Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market prices or rents. These can include shared ownership, affordable rented housing and intermediate rent. The Council will consider the suitability of other forms of intermediate housing, such as low-cost market housing, in light of its genuine affordability to those in housing need. (Key worker housing is defined separately from intermediate affordable housing.)

11. Policy CS23 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 requires residential development to deliver a balanced mix of housing to meet the projected future household need, both within each site and across Oxford as a whole. The mix of housing relates to the size, type and tenure of dwellings to provide for a range of households.
12. The Balance of Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document (BoDs) sets out the appropriate housing mixes for each Neighbourhood Area within the City. The site is located within the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Area, where a reasonable proportion of new family dwellings are required within residential schemes. For the purposes of BoDs a family dwelling is a house or flat of three or more bedrooms. In terms of BoDs the scheme meets the requirements in terms of 3 bed units however there is a small over provision of 2 bed units.
13. The Housing Register is showing more demand for 2 bed family units than 3 beds, particularly in the priority bands at the top of the list where most people are housed from, therefore given there is a need for 2 bed affordable housing the slight over provision in terms of BoDs is considered acceptable.

Design

14. Policy HP9 of the Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026 states that planning permission will only be granted for residential development that responds to the overall character of the area, including its built and natural features; the form, layout and density of the scheme make an efficient use of land, whilst respecting the site context; the development exploits opportunities to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets and makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; landscaping, and boundary treatments are provided that integrate the development, in a way that defines public and private space and maintains natural surveillance of the public realm. This is supported by Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS18, and Policies CP1 and CP6 of the Oxford Local Plan 2011-2016.
15. The proposal consists of two elements in separate blocks; 3 pairs of semi-detached houses and a 3 storey apartment block.
16. The houses are simple in form and are to be faced in buff colour brick with tiled pitched gable end roofs. The proposed materials are not considered to be out of keeping with the surrounding area, where there is a variety of materials in the immediate vicinity.
17. The apartment building is has been articulated with the use of bays and Juliet balconies. It is the rear elevation of the apartment block has faces Elsfield Way/A40. The treatment of this elevation is important given its prominence within the street scene when travelling along the A40. The façade is broken up with a series of bays, the use of materials and detailing. This adds interest in the street scene and helps to avoid a monolithic appearance. The roof is shallow pitched behind a parapet wall reflecting in some ways the office building next door.

Impact upon adjoining properties

18. Policy HP14 of the Sites and Housing Plan states that residential development should provide reasonable privacy and daylight for the occupants of both existing and new homes. It goes no to state planning permission will not be granted for any development that has an overbearing effect on existing homes.
19. As a result of the Swiss Pole demonstration it became apparent that the houses as originally proposed would have a detrimental impact on the properties fronting Harefields in terms of mass and bulk, overshadowing and loss of light. As a result the ridge height of the houses has been reduced from 8.64m to 7.5m. Also the position of the houses has been shifted away from the the boundary with the Harefields properties by 1.9m, thus increasing the distance to those houses and improving their prospect and outlook.
20. It is acknowledged there will be some impact on the Harefields properties in terms of outlook given that currently there are no structures within the nearest part of the site. However it is considered that this impact is acceptable given the reduction in height and the gap between the boundary and the gable end. There are no windows on the gable ends of the houses and therefore there are no issues of adverse overlooking or loss of privacy.
21. In respect of access to sunlight and daylight, the 45° guidelines will be used, as outlined in appendix 7 of the Sites and Housing Plan. The proposed houses will not breach either the 45 or the 25 degree rule . Although the effect will be noticeable to the Harefields residents in view of the fact that the site is currently an open car park, this effect of the proposal is acceptable and will ensure the neighbouring properties enjoy acceptable levels of daylight, sunlight and outlook.
22. With regards to the property immediately to the west of the site, (6 Elsfield Way) it has no habitable room windows in its side elevation therefore there are no issues of loss of sunlight/daylight or outlook. Wall to wall the gap is around 4m and the depth of the apartment block is about the same as the house thus the apartment block is not considered to be overbearing on the dwelling.
23. The rear gardens of the proposed dwellings will back on to the side boundary of 6 Elsfield Way. The proposed gardens have a depth of 10m and it is proposed to retain as much as possible of the mature planting along this boundary. The garden of 6 Elsfield Way is approximately 50m long with the area immediately at the rear of the building not being affected. Therefore the proposed location of the new dwellings are not considered to have a detrimental impact on 6 Elsfield Way in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy, or be of an overbearing nature.

Amenity of New Residential Units

- 24 The proposed dwellings would have a good standard of internal environment

that would accord with Policy HP12 (indoor space) of the Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026. Furthermore the Planning Statement indicates that the dwelling house would be designed to meet lifetime Homes Standards in accordance with Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026 Policy HP2.

25. Policy HP13 of the Sites and Housing Plan states that new dwellings should have direct and convenient access to an area of private open space. It recognises that family homes will require additional space, and this means that they should be provided with a private garden of adequate size and proportions for the size of house proposed, for exclusive use by occupants of that house.
26. The proposed 3 bed houses will each have a small front garden and a private garden at the rear of the property which is proportionate to the property size. Each apartment will have a private balcony on the north elevation, with all ground floor units having immediate access to a terraced area in front of the building. There is also a communal garden proposed. The proposal will therefore provide a satisfactory level of amenity space.
27. Provision of a communal refuse store/collection point is provided which provides a dedicated safe, discrete and conveniently accessible storage of refuse for each unit. This collection point is located to the north of the apartment block.

Highways

28. The Transport Statement provides the results of two surveys of the existing commercial development. These surveys were carried out on 27th June 2013 and 9th July 2013 and show a peak parking demand of 67 vehicles. The statement acknowledges that there may be occasions when this parking demand would be exceeded but that the proposed number of spaces (70) would be adequate.
29. These midsummer surveys are likely to produce workplace parking demand levels that would be lower than (say) a cold and rainy midwinter. On that basis the likelihood is that there is insufficient car parking being proposed and that overspill parking would take place on the surrounding neighbouring residential streets.
30. The recently approved Five Mile Drive and Cutteslowe CPZ will protect existing residents from the impact of any overspill parking and that CPZ will require to be extended to include the new housing development
31. 35 car parking spaces are proposed for the 17 residential dwellings. The six houses (located to the northeast of the site) each have two allocated spaces, the 11 apartments share 23 unallocated parking spaces.
32. These unallocated spaces would be particularly vulnerable to overspill car parking from the existing commercial development. The Transport Statement has anticipated this problem and indicates that the residential parking could be

enforced by parking management or parking permits.

33. The 12 spaces allocated to the six houses leaves the ten unallocated spaces (to the north of the site) remote from the apartments (to the south of the site) that they would be serving. Making the whole site subject to a parking permit scheme would allow vehicles to park in the most convenient available space.
34. It is therefore essential that all of the residential parking is included as unallocated parking in the Five Mile Drive and Cutteslowe Controlled Parking zone.
35. Concerns have been raised with regard to the safety of the proposed access arrangements. A condition is therefore required to ensure that the appropriate independent safety audits are carried out and that any issues raised by these audits are addressed.
36. The car parking for the office building will be rationalised and formalised to create 70 spaces. The number of spaces proposed is above the car parking standards however it is below the current numbers.

Cycle Parking

37. Policy CS13 of the Oxford Core Strategy states that planning permission will only be granted for development that prioritises access by walking, cycling and public transport. A fundamental part of encouraging cycling is the provision of secure cycle storage within people's homes.
38. The cycle parking standards set out in Policy HP15 are minimum standards with houses and flats up to 2 bedrooms to have at least 2 spaces per dwelling and houses and flats of 3 or more bedrooms to have at least 3 spaces per dwelling.
39. Cycle parking for the dwellings is located at the rear and for the flats there is a communal cycle store within the building accessed at ground floor level. Three spaces are proposed for each dwelling and there is a total of 24 spaces for the flats all of which meets and exceeds the Site and Housing Plan requirements.
40. It is the intention of the applicant to close the two existing vehicular access points to Elsfield Way. Whilst the retention of these accesses for cyclist and pedestrian traffic would have been desirable in terms of permeability, it is recognised that the layout of the commercial element car parking would prohibit their use. These accesses should be stopped up and the highway reinstated.

Sustainability

41. Policy CS9 of the Oxford Core Strategy sets out a commitment to optimising energy efficiency through a series of measures including the utilisation of technologies that achieve Zero Carbon developments. A key strategic

objective in the Core Strategy seeks to maximise Oxford's contribution to tackling the causes of climate change and minimise the use of non-renewable resources.

42. In accordance with policy HP11 of the Sites and Housing Plan developments of 10 or more homes are expected to achieve at least 20% of their energy consumption from renewable or low-carbon technologies.
43. The application proposes that the development meets the energy generation requirement by achieving 12% onsite generation through the installation of Solar PV. With the remaining supplemented by suitable, additional on-site renewable energy systems. The remaining requirement will be met through one of or combination of the following options;
 - i. The installation of Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) to supplement the installation of Solar PV, and/or
 - ii. The installation of Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP) to supplement the installation of Solar PV.
44. The exact specification of low carbon and renewable energy will be determined at the detailed design stage. This can be conditioned to ensure one or more of the above are utilised or other low carbon technologies should they become available to meet the 20% requirement as detailed in policy HP11 or other suitable renewable.
45. The proposals are also designed to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes level 4.

Biodiversity

46. In line with recognised good practice and governmental policy on biodiversity and sustainability (National Planning Policy Framework 2012 & NERC 2006), all practical opportunities should be taken to harmonise the built development with the needs of wildlife. The NPPF seeks to provide a net enhancement to biodiversity through sustainable development and policy CS12 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 states: Opportunities will be taken (including through planning conditions or obligations to): ensure the inclusion of features beneficial to biodiversity within new developments throughout Oxford.
47. In this instance it is appropriate for provisions for wildlife to be built into the development. Swifts and bats are urban biodiversity priority species almost entirely dependent on exploiting human habitation for roosting and nesting. An appropriate provision for this development would be 1 swift box on the east and west aspects of each of the 3 northern buildings: totalling 6 boxes. These should be integrated boxes installed within the brickwork as close to the roof line as possible. Boxes should not be installed above windows. On the southern building 2 bat roosting tubes are required on the southern aspect. 2 swift boxes are required on the eastern and western aspects of this building: 4 boxes in total. A condition can be imposed to ensure the appropriate for provisions for wildlife to be built into the development.

Trees

48. The site has an important aspect onto Elsfield Way, but the quality and wider significance of the existing landscape features on the site is generally relatively low. The most significant site feature is the boundary hedge running along the external side of the southern boundary with Elsfield Way. The proposals indicate that this feature is to remain and this will act to screen from the south the proposed brick wall, intended to provide noise reduction from road traffic.
49. The proposed new access from Harefields involves the loss of an ash and an oak from a group of trees on the highway verge; individually these are high quality trees and as a group it provides a positive feature in the street scene, and a partial screen to the existing commercial building. Replacement planting of a specimen tree at the entrance to the site could over time provide mitigation for this loss; although no such design is indicated in existing proposals, this measure can be secured through conditioning the details of landscape design.
50. The proposed new car park to the south of the existing commercial building will require the loss of 5 mature crab apple trees, and one early-mature Turkey oak along the southern boundary; indicative tree replacements are shown in plans that will provide an adequate level of mitigation for his impact over time.
51. Additional new tree planting is shown for the proposed open amenity area between Elsfield Way and the southern block of units; and in a loose configuration, in a proposed verge area between the existing commercial building and the proposed housing scheme. This is considered to be an appropriate landscape strategy that will enable use of a small number of large growing tree species located to provide features to create an attractive residential landscape setting, whilst minimising issues of shading and dominance. No new landscape-scale tree planting is therefore proposed for the boundaries to the north or west, which will avoid such problems affecting neighbouring properties or new residential private gardens.
52. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in arboricultural and landscape terms in reference to adopted Oxford Local Plan Policies CP1, CP11, NE15 and NE16 subject to conditions.

Cadet Building

53. The current Cadet building on the site is to be removed in order to facilitate the proposal. The building is a 1970's prefabricated building of no architectural merit therefore its loss is considered acceptable.
54. The proposal is to relocate the Cadets into a building in the north east corner of the site which is currently an office. This will provide better accommodation for the Cadets and the loss of the small office is not considered to be an issue given the level of office accommodation on the site.

Other Matters

Contaminated Land

55. The Ground Condition Assessment report identifies that there are two potential sources of contamination on the site consisting of a potential underground bulk fuel storage tank and an electrical substation. The report concludes that the risk from these sources is low and states that a phase 2 intrusive ground investigation is not necessary.
56. Whilst the site history and surrounding land use history do not indicate that there are likely to be significant contamination issues with the site in general, officers do not think that sufficient information has been submitted in relation to the potential underground fuel storage tank. The report contains no factual information as to whether it is still in use or if it has been decommissioned properly.
57. Therefore, officers recommend that a condition be added to secure a phase 2 intrusive site investigation prior to commencement, to ensure that the site is either suitable and safe for the works and the proposed residential use, or can be made to be so through appropriate mitigation measures to be carried out prior to commencement.

Archaeology

58. Officers can confirm that we have received a satisfactory archaeological evaluation report for this site from Thames Valley Archaeological Services. The evaluation did not identify any significant archaeological remains and officers would therefore not request any further work in relation to this site.

Noise

59. A 2.5m high acoustic barrier built in brick behind the existing hedge row which will help to maintain the verdant edge to the A40.
60. Officers confirm that they have examined the documents supplied by Christy Ho of Peter Brett Associates in her Technical Note dated 19th December 2013. Officers confirm that the consultation references within are correct and that they consider the statements made to be appropriate. The design measures proposed appear to be the best arrangement for noise protection of proposed dwellings and communal outdoor space. Officers therefore have no objection to make provided that the development is carried out as specified in these documents

Air Quality

61. An air quality assessment has been carried out and has concluded that air quality for future residents within the development will be acceptable and no mitigation measures are proposed. Concentrations have been modelled for

eight receptors, representing locations within the new development. In the case of nitrogen dioxide, the modelling has been carried out assuming both a) vehicle emissions decrease (using 'official' emission factors) and b) do not decrease in future years. This is to allow for current uncertainty over emission factors for nitrogen oxides that has been identified by Defra. It was concluded that concentrations of nitrogen dioxide PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} will be below the relevant objectives in 2015. The overall operational air quality impacts of the development were judged to be insignificant. However if Members are minded they can request a condition requiring appropriate ventilation measure to ensure residents do not need to open their windows in terms of air quality with windows facing the A40.

Conclusion:

62. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the relevant policies of the Development Plan, and therefore officer's recommendation to Members is to approve the development.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

Background Papers:

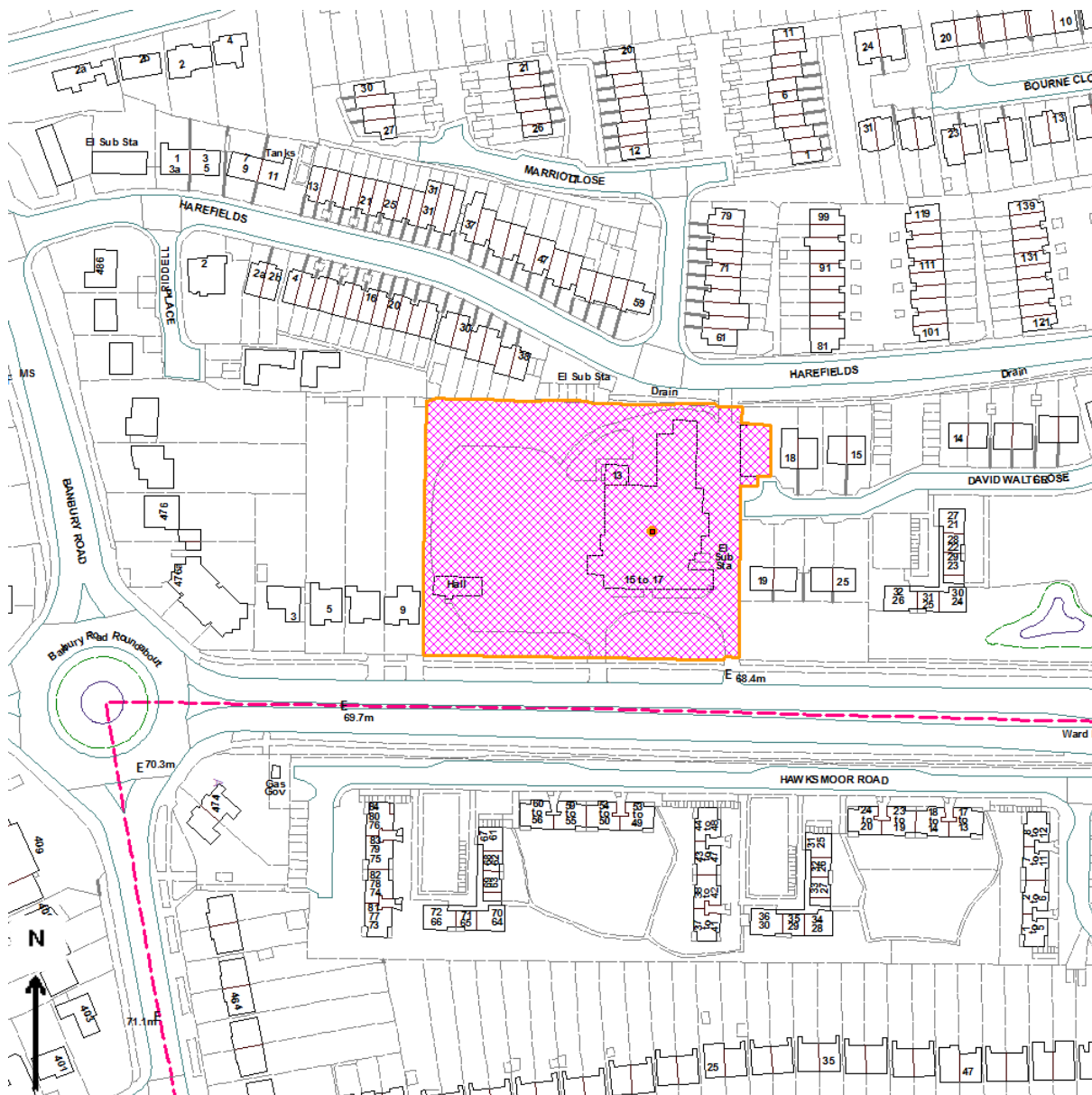
Contact Officer: Lisa Green

Extension: 2614

Date: 11th July 2014

Appendix 1

13/03454/CT3 - Elsfield Hall



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Ordnance Survey 100019348

Appendix 2 – Swiss Pole Pilot

The applicants kindly agreed to partake in this pilot. They explored alternative options for the “Swiss poles” demonstration, such as a scaffolding framework, or free-standing metal poles cemented into the ground, both of which proved too expensive and not possible in view of the active use of the site as a car park.

In the end they opted for a practical solution. They sourced surface-mounted light-weight carbon-fibre poles, that were fixed into heavy-duty commercial parasol bases. This was a relatively low cost option (c. £600 for 8 pole plus bases). These poles plus the base can reach a 10.3m maximum height, which just fitted with the height of the proposed block of flats.

In view of their mobile lightweight nature they required supervision throughout the demonstration and therefore the period on site was limited. At the same time they were susceptible to high winds and two of them were bent damaged beyond repair.

The first demonstration on the 5 February 2014, involved the erection of the poles at key points of the proposed block of flats at the Elsfield Hall application site. This innovative approach demonstrated where the gable locations for the building would be sited, along with the height of proposals up to eaves and ridge height, to give residents a feel for the scale and location of the building.

The demonstration proved a valuable exercise in confirming the acceptability of the block of flats. Furthermore, some Harefields residents requested the same for the row of the three pairs a semi-detached houses. This was carried out on 12 March and identified that the northern end gable would, by reason of its height and proximity, would appear overbearing to the residents of the Harefields properties abutting the site.

Following the exercise the applicant (the Council) and its design team reflected on the findings which resulted in the roof pitch being reduced and the ridge height being reduced by 1.14m and the gable end being moved 1.9m further away from the existing buildings.

The Swiss pole Test was re-run on the 20 May for the area previously identified by residents as being of most concern (the area adjacent to the rear gardens on Harefields). This exercise resulted in both the original location and height of the proposed end gable as proposed originally and as amended. This approach allowed residents to see the reduction in height and movement away from the site boundary that had been achieved by clearly depicting the difference between the two sets of poles.

From the attendees that viewed the revised proposals, it was encouraging to receive feedback that they were more positive towards the revised proposals; it was agreed that some sketches would be produced depicting the revised proposals for residents to comment on, prior to final submission of the revised drawings. This also allowed for residents unable to attend the demonstration the opportunity to see revisions and make any comments.

Through positive dialogue and the two on-site demonstrations, the applicant has been able to identify an area of residents' concern and to address this effectively. The resulting work has achieved an improved spatial relationship and design appearance to the existing properties at Harefields. It is considered that this has been an effective and good example of real community consultation in shaping the final design for the allocated residential site at Elsfield Hall.

Officers' Commentary on the pilot and lessons learnt

The pilot in this case was successful as this was a cleared and level car park site. There were constraints in terms of the maximum height of the poles, their susceptibility to windy conditions, which can result in them bending out of position and therefore not being very useful, as well as being damaged. Being lightweight mobile features meant that they required supervision which in turn allowed only a limited period of display in situ.

However the poles were able on this occasion to provide a basic and approximate representation of the location and extent (height and massing) of the proposed buildings on site, which however enabled the residents to better visualise the proposal and to submit their comments. It also enabled the applicants to engage with the neighbours, identify their concern and try to address them.

The "Swiss poles" in this case have proved useful. Their use would depend on the circumstances of the site and the proposal. Most of all however it would depend on the willingness of applicants to oblige and use such a tool. In many cases architects take care to ensure that the external appearance and treatment of buildings are designed so as to minimise their visual impact and to fit into their environs. The "Swiss poles" are a crude tool and cannot convey such a vision. Applicants therefore may feel that they will not do justice to their proposal. Applicants are not currently required to use "Swiss poles".

Nevertheless, it is proposed that where officers have pre-application discussions on proposals and sites that would appear to lend themselves to this practice, then they will suggest their use to the applicant. Officers will be asked to keep a record of their requests. The Council's Asset Management team will also be encouraged to rent their poles out to interested applicants.

Finally, officers in holding pre-application proposals have been and will continue to explore with and encourage applicants where appropriate to use different methods to represent and explain their proposals, such as photomontages, artists' impressions, models, electronic fly-throughs and also other on-site devices, such as floating balloons.

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